Shortage of Space in Hyderabad Passport Office

2784. DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the problems of Regional Passport Office at Hyderabad like inadequacy of space, inconverence to customers, involvement of brokers, irresponsible behaviour of staff, unusual delay in issuing passport etc; and

(b) if so, what measures Government propose to take to improve the working conditions at the Regional Passport Office, Hyderabad?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) The Government is aware of the constraints of space in the Passport Offices, including Passport Office, Hyderabad, following the marked increase in the number of applicants in recent years. The Government has undertaken a programme of hiring better premises and purchasing land or built up property for all the Passport Offices.

The existence of certain individuals, not belonging to the Passport Offices, who seek to exploit applicants, has come to the notice of the Government.

Whenever complaints of bad behaviour by a member of a Passport Office are received, they are investigated and if it is established that the complaint has substance, action is taken against the erring officer.

Passport Office, Hyderabad takes approximately 55 days to issue a passport in the normal course when the application is complete in all respects.

Government have taken a number of steps to improve the functioning of the Passport Offices including PO, Hyderabad. These steps inter alia include stabilisation of the supply of passport booklets; introduction of a productivity linked incentive scheme; creation of 400 additional posts; etc. In addition, through the supply of adequate and modern office equipment, facilities at the Passport Offices, including Passport Office Hyderabad, are being improved.

Development of Rocket Missile Technology by Pakistan

2785. SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:
SHRI J. S. RAJU:
Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that Pakistan has derived Rocket technology from Aerospathiale. French space company;

(b) if so, details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that China is clandestinely helping Pakistan to develop Rocket missile technology; if so, details thereof;

(d) whether Government have considered these issues seriously; and

(e) whether Government propose to take immediate steps to ensure that our defence system is geared up to meet such threats?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) to (e) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Casual workers in Passport Offices in the Country

2786. SHRI ANANT RAM JAISWAL:
SHRI ISH DUTT YADAV:
Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what was the total number of casual workers/daily wages workers employed in different passport offices in India since 30th June, 1992 till date;

(b) whether Government are considering to regularise their services; and

(c) if so, the period of regularisation, and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) The information is being collected and will be placed before the House.

(b) and (c) Services of casual workers are regularised against Group D posts in different Passport Offices on the basis of Government guidelines as and when vacancies arise.

U. S. Interference in India's Developmental Programmes

2787. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to approach forums like U. N. to protest against

increasing U. S. interference in India's developmental programmes like space, atomic power and the like; and

(b) if so, by what time?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DINESH SINGH): (a) and (b) India and the US maintain a continuing dialogue on all major issues of concern to each country. Since these issues are addressed bilaterally, Government do not propose to raise such issues in multilateral fora like the UN.

Complaints regarding Bogus Passports

2788. SHRIMATI KAILASHPATI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any complaints regarding issue of bogus passports from the Lucknow Passport Office; and

(b) if so, the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) and (b) Cases of passports which have been obtained fraudulently from various passport offices in India including Passport Office, Lucknow, have come to Govt.'s notice. Wherever investigation of such cases substantiates that the passports were fraudulently obtained, necessary action is taken under the Passport Act, 1967.

लखनऊ पासपोर्ट कार्यालय में दलालों के माध्यम से पासपोर्ट जारी किया जाना

2789. **श्रीमती कैलाशपति**: क्या विदेश मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार का ध्यान 1 जुलाई, 1993 को लखनऊ से प्रकाशित समाचार पत्र "स्वतंत्र भारत" में प्रकाशित समाचार की ओर दिलाया गया है कि पासपोर्ट कार्यालय में पासपोर्ट केवल दलालों के माध्यम से ही जारी किए जा रहे हैं;

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ग) उक्त कार्यालय में भ्रष्टाचार को रोकने के लिए सरकार ने क्या कदम उठाए हैं या उठाने का विचार रखती है?

विदेश मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री आर. एल. भाटिया): (क) से (ग) सरकार ने इस खबर को देखा है। सरकार को यह जानकारी है कि पासपोर्ट कार्यालय से सम्बन्ध न रखने वाले कुछ व्यक्ति आवेदकों का शोषण करने की कोशिश करते हैं। जब भी पासपोर्ट कार्यालय के किसी कर्मचारी के संबंध में कदाचार अथवा भ्रष्ट आचरण का कोई विशिष्ट आरोप साबित हो जाता है तो कानून के अनुसार कार्यवाही की जाती है।

Agreement between India and Ukraine

2790. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Ukraine has decided to cooperate with India in the field of Defence, Space, Shipping and sophisticated technology;

(b) if so, whether during President's visit a number of proposals were considered;

(c) if so, whether any delegation from India visited Ukraine; and

(d) if so, what are the proposals on which Agreement has been reached?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) The Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between India and Ukraine signed on 27-3-1992 provides for cooperation in several fields including the political, trade, cultural, industrial, science & technology and environmental spheres. In pursuance of that Treaty, bilateral agreements with Ukraine are being negotiated in a variety of fields.

(b) During the President's visit to Ukraine ongoing and potential areas of cooperation were discussed.

(c) and (d) Future discussions are envisaged in both Kiev and New Delhi on ongoing and new areas of cooperation.

Increase in Fee for Duplicate Passport

2791. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI:
SHRI IQBAL SINGH:
Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to hike the fee for issue of duplicate Passports in lost/damaged documents;

(b) if so, whether the main reason is that there has been an increase in the loss of atleast 10,000 passports every year reported by Indian nationals;

(c) whether a racket in the use of such Passports after substitution of Photographs has been discovered in the Gulf region, Western Europe and North America;

(d) if so, to what extent Government propose to hike the fee of duplicate passports; and